

GAINING COVERAGE FOR ENDANGERED BUTTERFLY



Photo by David Faulkner

populations are currently located in the southwestern portion of the County. It has suffered such a significant population loss that it was thought to be extinct during the 1980's.

The Quino checkerspot butterfly was listed by court order as endangered around the time that the County MSCP plan was nearing completion. At the time, it was not included as a "covered species" under the MSCP because the Wildlife Agencies did not feel that there was enough information known about it. The overall goal of the MSCP plan is to provide a means that "covered species" will be protected in areas that are important but that reasonable development may take place even though it may impact less important areas inhabited by the species.

The County received an endangered species grant from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to work on amending the existing MSCP plan to gain coverage for the Quino checkerspot butterfly. Over the past year and a half, there have been a series of meetings with stakeholders representing building, wildlife agency and environmental interests.

The Quino checkerspot butterfly was once one of the most common butterflies in Southern California. It occurs in openings of Coastal sage scrub and some Chaparral habitats. The largest known

One of the major components of a proposal to gain coverage for the Quino checkerspot butterfly is a report identifying the monitoring and management needs of the butterfly. This report is to be included in a coverage package along with an amendment to the MSCP to include the butterfly. In order to prepare a scientifically-based and valid management plan, the County contracted with five independent scientists (See page 6).

The County held two workshops with these scientists earlier this year. In January, they met to discuss the specific requirements for the butterfly and various methods that can be used to monitor them. The scientists met again in May to discuss refinements in monitoring and habitat enhancement concepts. Each scientist was also responsible for preparing documentation for a final report. It is currently pending.

While the scientific report is being prepared, the County is also working with Helix Environmental to assemble other types of materials for the coverage package to amend the MSCP for the butterfly. These materials include maps of the distribution and potential habitat for the butterfly within the MSCP boundary and specific protocols for various segments of the MSCP that identify, if necessary, the types of habitat surveys and mitigation measures that need to take place.

For additional information, please visit the MSCP website at www.mscp-sandiego.org or contact us at mscp@sdcounty.ca.gov.

NORTH COUNTY MSCP HABITAT EVALUATION MAP AVAILABLE!

The North County MSCP Subarea Plan Habitat Evaluation Map is now available for purchase through SanGIS. While this map DOES NOT depict the ultimate conservation area for the North County MSCP, it will contribute to the definition of such an area. To purchase your map for a fee of \$15, please contact SanGIS at (619) 702-0400 or webmaster@sangis.org. A graphic of the product is also available for viewing at <http://www.sangis.org/sangis/mapgal/dplu0013a/index.html>.



WATERSHED PLANNING EFFORTS

Proposition 13, a \$1.97 billion bond act, was passed by the California voters in the March 2000 elections. It provides funding for projects that protect water quality, watersheds and flood control. The County of San Diego applied for and received approval of four watershed planning grants totaling approximately \$800,000. The four watersheds include the Santa Margarita, San Diego, Otay and the Tijuana River Watersheds.

A **watershed** is defined as "a geographic area where all water that enters the area will flow to a common point." For example, rain that first falls in Julian will eventually enter the San Diego River through a system of streams, creeks and groundwater flow. This rainwater would travel downstream through El Capitan Reservoir, Lakeside, Santee, Mission Valley and then into the Pacific Ocean. This mechanism of water flow through a watershed provides a myriad of environmental benefits from pollution and flood control to providing wetland habitats and corridors for a whole suite of sensitive species of plants and animals.

There are several reasons why watershed planning is important. Economically speaking, a natural functioning watershed system provides a no-cost water purification system that removes pollutants from water that otherwise would end up in our drinking water and oceans. Wetland systems associated with watersheds also provide better flood protection than man-made systems. Since watersheds often encompass many jurisdictions and land use types, watershed planning provides for a mechanism to coordinate planning on several levels. Additionally, the Municipal Stormwater Permit requires that local jurisdictions provide water quality reporting on a watershed-based scale.

After the approval of the MSCP in 1997, it was determined that although the MSCP provides coverage for 85 species, it does not provide coverage for impacts to wetlands or species specifically associated with wetlands. As a result, the County and the City of San Diego created a Wetlands Task Force to help identify innovative approaches to better protect and manage wetlands. A major task was to identify processes that could achieve the dual goals of providing protection for sensitive resources while streamlining the

permitting process required to impact wetland areas. Watershed planning is an integral process that provides the framework to achieve these goals. Also, as a result of requirements of the Stormwater Permit, the County of San Diego has created a multi-departmental staff comprised of the Department of Environmental Health (monitoring and education), the Department of Public Works (enforcement and engineering) and the Department of Planning and Land Use (watershed planning) to directly deal with implementation of the permit in coordination with the County's Project Clean Water Program.

Funding for planning is available from several sources beyond the Proposition 13 funding mentioned above. In addition, a companion bond, Proposition 12 – Parks and Open Space, a \$2.1 billion bond, was passed in 2000. The voters passed another bond in 2002, Proposition 40 – Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Act, providing an additional \$2.6 billion. The County of San Diego has also committed funding for staff to prepare the planning efforts.

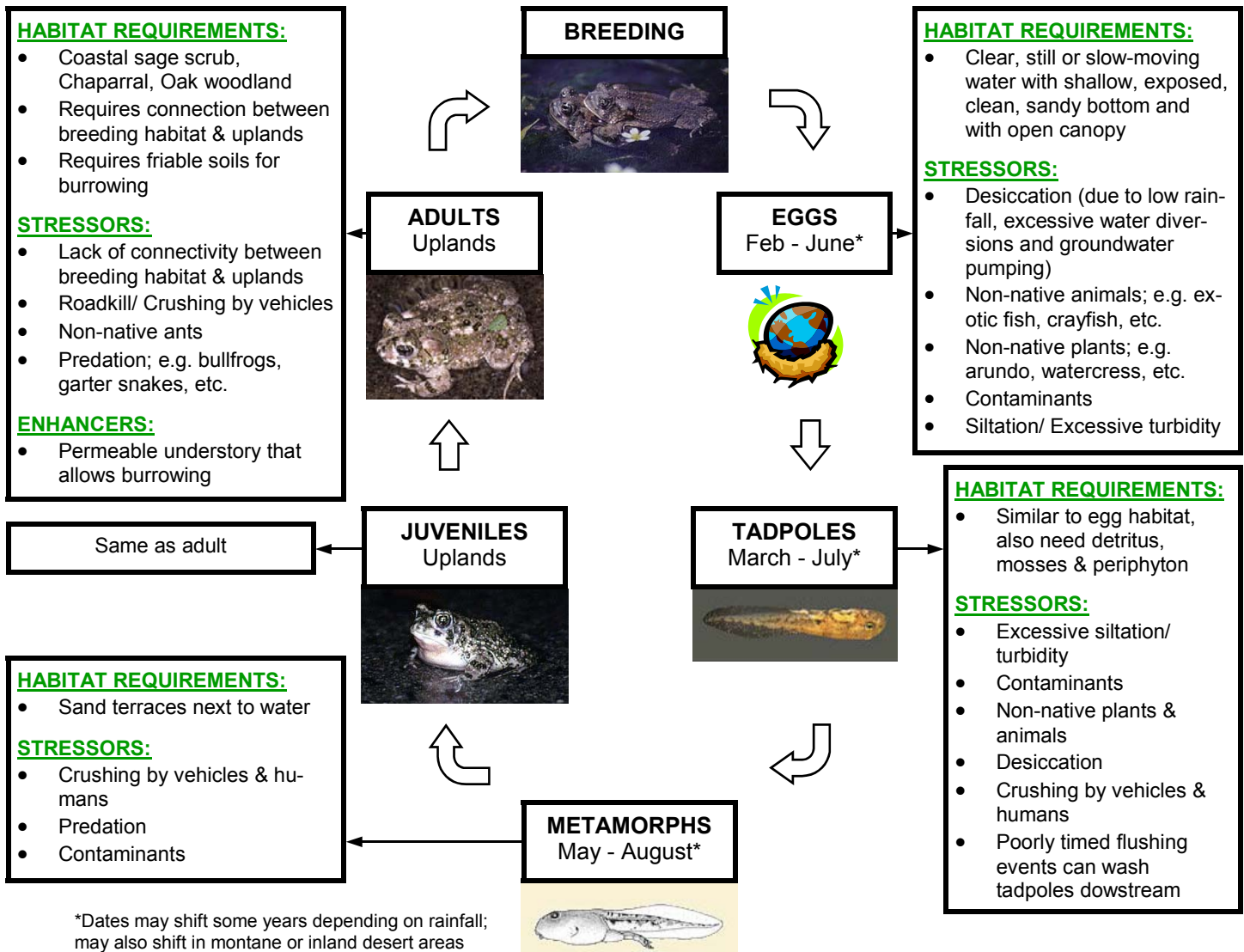


For more information on how to become involved with watershed planning efforts, please contact the following:

- Santa Margarita and Tijuana Rivers- Iovanka Todt
(858) 874-4190, iovanka.todt@sdcounty.ca.gov;
- San Diego River- Teresa Brownyard
(619) 338-2410, teresa.brownyard@sdcounty.ca.gov;
- Otay River- Tracy Cline
(858) 495-5513, tracy.cline@sdcounty.ca.gov.



ARROYO TOAD LIFECYCLE



USGS/ Photo by Chris Brown

WORKING TOGETHER TO SAVE THE ARROYO TOAD

The North County MSCP Subarea encompasses the habitat needed by the Arroyo toad and the Stephen's kangaroo rat to live. These listed species were not present in the existing MSCP Subarea, therefore posing a new challenge for County and wildlife agency staff and landowners who all seek coverage for the species. The Arroyo toad breeds in creeks and drainages and then travels up to one kilometer away to upland areas to complete the juvenile and adult phases of its lifecycle. County staff is currently working with agricultural stakeholders to develop Best Management Practices (BMPs) that can be beneficial to both the Arroyo toad and the farmers. These BMPs include maintaining connectivity with upland areas and minimizing and targeting the use of pesticides and herbicides.



MSCP RECEIVES NATIONAL AWARD

The County of San Diego MSCP was one of fourteen County programs honored in a competition held by the National Association of Counties (NACo). With more than 2,000 member counties from across the United States, NACo's primary role is to represent county government interests at the federal government level in Washington D.C. Since 1970, NACo's Achievement Award program has "continued to embody the grass-roots and local government energy the program was designed to promote" recognizing "responsible, responsive and effective county government."

Chairman Ron Roberts of the County Board of Supervisors had this to say in response to the County's fourteen individual awards: "I am proud to receive this honor from the National Association of Counties, on behalf of my colleagues on the Board of Supervisors, our management team, and the County's 18,000 employees. Although we here at the County of San Diego believe we are a leader in local government, it is always nice to receive recognition from our peers."

To learn more about NACo or to see a complete list of the County's awards, visit the NACo website at www.naco.org.



OTAY MESA MINT



Photo by Greg Mason

Otay mesa mint (*Pogogyne nudiuscula*), a small annual with bright purple flowers, is one of San Diego County's most endangered species. It is much rarer than its cousin, the San Diego mesa mint (*Popogyne abramsii*), which also has Federal Endangered status. Populations of the Otay mesa mint once ranged as far south as northern Baja California; however, the species is currently restricted to the Vernal Pool habitats of San Diego County. Otay

Mesa currently possesses the only healthy, well-protected, viable populations of the species. A variety of factors including airport expansion and free-ranging cattle grazing impact the Otay mesa mint. Therefore, all populations should be fully protected with adequate buffers.

Otay mesa mint is protected with both Federal and State Endangered status. It is also one of 85 MSCP covered species. Two other MSCP covered species, Orcutt's brodiaea (*Brodiaea orcuttii*) and San Diego goldenstar (*Muilla clevelandii*) are often associated with this species.

San Diego County is one of 25 biodiversity hotspots in the world. It has the greatest number of critical and endangered species in all of North America. The Otay mesa mint is nearing extinction; therefore, efforts need to be made to ensure its success. It must be preserved so that future generations can enjoy the beauty that it has to offer.



LOCAL STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN CLEAN UP

On April 20th, two days before Earth Day, over 30 energetic students from Ms. Rhian Purdy's biology class at West Hills High School in Santee came out to Carlton Oaks Wetlands Preserve to participate in a clean-up event. In addition, there was support from Ms. Sonja Ramos from Steele Canyon High School, Mr. Van Collinsworth from the Preserve Wild Santee group, Marsha Cook and Patricia Heyden from the County of San Diego and Don Hunsaker III from The Environmental Trust (TET).

The group was at the Preserve site for approximately two hours. A great deal was accomplished as the group worked together to gather about 3/4 of a ton of trash. The 43-acre Preserve is part of the San Diego River Watershed and is an important part of the open water/wetlands ecosystem of the San Diego River Basin. This valuable land is home to the endangered Least Bell's vireo as well as raptors such as Cooper's hawk and the Red-tailed hawk. The Preserve's two-acre pond also provides temporary refuge to migrating birds.

The students from both schools returned to the site on May 4th to help with the planting of four species of willows (*Salix gooddingii*, *lasiolepis*, *exigua*, and *laevigata*) as part of an ongoing five-acre wetlands creation project in the Carlton Oaks portion of the San Diego River. For further information, please call Donny Hunsaker at The Environmental Trust at 619-461-8333.



EARTH DAY FESTIVITIES



USACOE/American
Bald eagle

Every year, thousands of San Diegans head over to Balboa Park to celebrate Earth Day, and this year was no exception. On Sunday, April 21, 2002, San Diego Earthworks celebrated with its 13th annual Earth Fair. Once again, the MSCP participated as an exhibitor. With the midday sun blaz-

ing, MSCP staff happily greeted passersby offering colorful stickers of some of the MSCP's 85 covered species. Kids picked up bookmarks developed in partnership with San Diego County Library staff with titles of books about the environment available at local County libraries printed on the back. New to the booth was a map of all the vegetation communities that can be found in San Diego County. Flyers with information about the individual communities were also available so that people could learn more about the habitat that surrounds them. MSCP staff was also on hand to answer questions and to distribute

the Earth Day edition of *MSCP News* as well as the *Living Close to Nature* brochure.

Mary Anne Pentis and the Vernal Pool Society also contributed to the MSCP booth with several colorful displays, including photographs of some of San Diego's most endangered species.



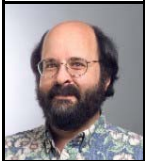
County staff were on hand to educate the public about the MSCP at the 13th annual Earth Fair in Balboa Park.



MEET THE QUINO ADVISORS!



Dr. Dennis D. Murphy of the University of Nevada at Reno is nationally recognized as one of the foremost experts on conservation of biodiversity and is a leading authority on the Quino checkerspot butterfly.



Dr. Richard A. Redak is a Professor of Entomology at the University of California at Riverside. The majority of his research is directed toward understanding the interactions between insect herbivores and their host plants.



Dr. Travis Longcore, a lecturer at the University of California at Los Angeles is an expert in urban conservation biology and restoration. He also has a strong background in understanding the Quino checkerspot butterfly.



Dr. Douglas H. Deutschman, Assistant Professor of Biology at San Diego State University, specializes in statistical analysis and is helping to prepare a monitoring plan for the Quino checkerspot butterfly.



Dr. Robert N. Fisher of the U.S. Geological Survey and a Research Professor of Biology at San Diego State University is an expert on habitat monitoring and data collection from the field. He is also helping to prepare a monitoring plan.

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